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moins sur quelques points, une synthèse. Le Proche-Orient ne figure ici que de façon très marginale, par une communication de J.-B. Yon, « Bilinguisme et trilinguisme à Palmyre » et, accessoirement, dans une belle étude de D. Feissel, « Écrire grec en alphabet latin : le cas des documents protobyzantins », où il est fait référence, entre autres, à un procès-verbal d'Apamée daté de 518 et à une souscription d'un évêque du mont Thabor.

En réalité, malgré l'intérêt de toutes les communications, on ne trouve pas de conclusions réellement neuves par rapport aux travaux antérieurs, et les études précises conduites sur les élites des cités grecques (A. Rizakis, C. Brelaz, M. Hatzopoulos), sur les *magistri* de Délos (Cl. Hasenohr), les documents officiels de Delphes (D. Rousset, qui donne très utilement les textes), conduisent toutes dans le même sens : le latin reste infiniment marginal, y compris dans les milieux de notables, chez les citoyens

romains d'origine grecque. Le latin apparaît partout comme une langue administrative, et son emploi est au mieux une concession pour honorer un officiel romain, mais même dans cet usage, il reste rare. Je ne crois pas que l'on puisse suivre l'idée, avancée avec prudence, par J.-B. Yon, d'une tentative discrète des Palmyréniens pour faire du latin une langue officielle de leur cité. Tout compte fait, si des mots latins émaillent de plus en plus les textes grecs à partir du III^e et surtout du IV^e s. (il est étrange qu'aucune communication ne s'y soit intéressée), l'emploi du latin renvoie presque toujours à la présence d'un Occidental, un latinophone : D. Feissel montre bien qu'il y a de fortes chances que l'évêque Restutus du mont Thabor soit un Africain. Mais si les conclusions ne sont pas neuves, la collaboration entre historiens et linguistes est éclairante, et le colloque vaut très largement comme instrument de méthode.

Maurice SARTRE

Finn Ove HVIDBERG-HANSEN, *Arṣū and Azīzū. A study of the West Semitic "Dioscuri" and the Gods of Dawn and Dusk (Historiske-filosofiske Meddelelser, 97)*, The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, Copenhagen, 2007, 117 p., ISBN : 978-8-7730-4311-0.

In his little book the author investigates the occurrence of twin gods in the Semitic religions from the Bronze Age until the late Roman Time. He wants to prove an indigenous oriental tradition of these twin gods, which he calls the West Semitic "Dioscuri". The author finds the oldest evidence of these twin gods in Bronze Age Ugarit: the gods Shahar and Shalim. He also tries to show the continuity of different mythological aspects which are connected with the two gods until the Late Roman Time. In the three chapters of his book he discusses various deities in the larger area of Syria-Palestine-Arabia-(North) Mesopotamia. The most important mythological aspect is the affinity of many of these deities to the Venus star. Further aspects are the relationship of the deities to the steppe as the border of civilisation and the domain of chaos and death ("*mdbr* motive"), the "hunting motive" and the birth of a godchild through a young woman or virgin. The last two can have an affinity to the Venus star. These mythological aspects are evident in the Ancient Near East at all times and can be found in many different local cultural and religious contexts. The author uses them as a sufficient criterion to establish relationships between various gods or to equate them.

The author aims high. While the immense results of the historical research of the last and present century uncover the complexity of cultural and religious developments in the Ancient Near East and

therefore increasingly concentrates on the study of local conditions to understand religious concepts and cults properly (keyword: local identity), the author turns his interest on the whole and neglects details, especially those which do not fit into his concept. The intention of the author is to establish a thesis of a general religious idea. Such a kind of proceeding can only be taken seriously today, if the proper analysis of the available sources is also considered. Unfortunately a proper analysis and discussion of the sources is missed in the short book. Very problematic is the author's methodical proceeding. The author often interprets religious conditions and contexts of different ages with evidences of a much later time and brings them into relation. He ignores that especially in the Late Roman Time we meet a pronounced syncretism with complex acculturations and all kinds of cults and deities. But it is hard for us to understand how these conditions developed over the centuries.

In the following it is only possible to give a very short review on the chapters without claiming for completeness. The author mentions too many gods and too many aspects only briefly and many pages of the book give occasion for discussion. The critical remarks must be restricted to some comments. They shall give a little insight in the author's way of thinking and arguing.

In the first chapter (Arṣū und Azīzū in Palmyra and the Palmyrène. Names and Position, p. 5-30)

the author deals with the twin gods of the title of the book, Arṣu and Azizu. This pair is represented on a relief from Palmyra and is identified in the added inscription (PAT 0320). While this constellation of the two deities is unique, the single gods are well known in the Syrian area in the Hellenistic-Roman Times. The author presents an almost complete collection of available sources about the Palmyrene god Arsu. Nineteen figures illustrate the character of Arsu. Arsu in Palmyra shows both aspects of Ares and Hermes. The etymology of the name leads back to the North Arabic deity Ruḏa. The evidence of Arsu in the Hauran and the Nabataean area is discussed in the second chapter, the deity Arq-Reshef from Sam'al, who is also etymologically linked with Ruḏa, is discussed in the third chapter.

Important for the thesis of the book is the interrelation between the pair Arṣū/Azīzū from Palmyra and the pair Azizos/Monimos from the late Roman Edessa. This relationship and the equation of the pairs have been debated for long among the scientists. From the Roman Emperor Julian (4th century) we have the information that Iamblichos (3rd century) identified Azizu with Ares and Monimos with Hermes. Because of the affinity of the Arabian Azīzū to the Venus Star, especially Han J.W. Drijvers proposed the interpretation of the pair as morning and evening star. The author follows this interpretation and identifies Arṣū/Azīzū with Azizos/Monimos. One is missing the discussion of the problem of equating Monimos = Arṣu = evening star. There is no hint in the Palmyrene area that Arṣū has any affinity to the Venus star at all. Arṣu in Palmyra shows aspects of Ares/Mars and of Hermes/Mercury (what is seen by the author), but not of the Venus star. The astral symbols on the Palmyrenian tesserae are difficult to understand and are not suitable as evidence. For a better understanding of the pair Arṣu and Azizu it is worth to look at other twin gods in the area. Unfortunately the author mentions only shortly the existence of further comparable twin gods in the Palmyrene area. These deities have different names and appear in different combinations: Abgal and Aṣar, Abgal and Maan, Aṣlam and Aṣar, Aṣar and Saad, Saad and Maan, Salman and 'rgy'. In the shrine of Abgal in Khirbet Semrine a fragmentary stele was found with the letters TΩP, which is probably to complete as (KΑΣ)TΩP. This little evidence of the veneration of the Dioscuri is very important. It shows that different deities could be understood as Dioscuri. They were combined in different pairs, but that doesn't mean that they all can be identified. Furthermore there is no hint of an astral character of the deities. The iconography shows them as rider gods with military

equipment. We find these kinds of deities from Greece to India. The iconographical motives are very similar, but the local identity reveals different concepts and deities. This background throws another light on the pair Azizos and Arṣū from Palmyra. Probably they are only a further local variant of the twin gods and therefore should not be identified with Azizos and Monimos too fast. There is furthermore a debate on the Edessian pair to understand them in a local Babylonian tradition which is noticed by the author but is not seriously taken into consideration.

In the second chapter (Arṣū-Azīzū and related Gods in the Nabataean-Arabian and South Arabian Area, p. 31-46) the author presents the sparse iconographical and epigraphic examples of "Dioscuri" in the Hauran and the Decapolis. One problem is that we have no epigraphic proof of the Edessian twin gods Azizos and Monimos. The few epigraphic evidences are restricted to the god Azizos. One bust on an altar can epigraphically be identified with Azizos, but for the second bust on the other side of the altar the identification with Monimos is not proven but deduced in analogy to the pair in Edessa. The equation of several gods in this chapter is not always convincing (for example naked boys carrying grapes of wine are linked with Dushara-Dionysos, Arṣu is linked with 'A'ra', the local god of Boṣra because of phonetic closeness). Convincing are the considerations about the veneration of Arsu in Rabbat Moba/Areopolis/Arsapolis and in the Hauran. It is plausible that the camel rider on some coins of Boṣra hints at Arṣu. The iconography characterizes him as a Bedouin warrior, an astral affinity to the Venus star is missing. Also missing is the twin.

Furthermore the author discusses the god Ruḏa. A primitive graffito of a star near to the name Ruḏa on a rock in the desert is enough evidence for the author to characterize the deity as astral deity. The gender of Ruḏa is much debated; the author follows S. Krone and classifies Ruḏa as an androgynous deity. In his double gender Ruḏa represents the morning and evening star. Dushara is probably also linked with Ruḏa, which is proved by the famous reference in Herodot (Historia III,8): Dushara alias Orotalt alias Ruḏa. With Dionysos-Dushara the author introduces a new mythological motive: the birth of a godchild through a virgin. Epiphanius in the fourth century reports about a festival in Elusa that was committed from the 25th of December until the 6th of January. The Christian and possibly Egyptian influences are obvious. This and the late attestation of this mythology are neglected by the author. The author links the divine child with the *deus bonus phosphorus* in Latin inscriptions of Dacia and Algeria and in this

way links the divine child with Azizos. Furthermore he introduces a further mythological motive, the dionysic motive, in connection with an Egyptian variant of the miracle of the transformation of water to wine which is connected with Dionysos-Osiris.

The second half of the chapter discusses the South Arabian Athtar, his aspects and his epithets. Here we have the best hint that the god is linked with the two aspects of the Venus star, the morning and the evening star. Via the aspect of the ritual hunt the author tries to identify Athtar with Arṣū in Dura Europos. There is hunt-scene in the so called banquet-house in Dura Europos. An inscription names four Palmyrenian gods, among them Arṣū. The connection of the gods to the hunt-scene is unclear and the link between Athtar and Arṣū is methodically extremely questionable. However, the author sees a common mythological motive, the "hunting topic", which he finds again in the Bronze Age in Ugarit.

In the third and last chapter (The Semitic 'Dioscuri' in North Syrian Texts, the Bible and related Literature, p. 47-93) the author discusses the oldest evidence of his assumed mythology. The Ugaritic text KTU 1.23 reports the begetting and birth of the gods Šaḥar and Šalim, the gods of dawn and dusk. The enigmatic text contains ritual and mythological elements and is difficult to understand. The repeated reports of begetting and birth and the changing names of the gods who are given birth occupy the scientists for decades. The author votes with others for the interpretation to relate all epithets to the same twins. The author finally finds all the mythological motives which were discussed in the first two chapters: There are twin gods who have an affinity to the morning and evening star (in the proper meaning dawn and dusk!); we have the birth of the gods through two young women (Athirat and Raḥmay); the twin gods are roaming around the fringes of the steppe ("hunting-topic") and last but not least there is a dionysic motive (drinking of wine).

The author links the text from Ugarit furthermore with an inscription in Palmyra (PAT 0992). This inscription, found in the ruins of the temple of Arṣu mentions several deities: Arṣū, Qismaya and either the daughters of El or a deity *bnt* (Banita). The designation "daughters" is also used in KTU 1.23 for the two goddesses who are giving birth to the gods. The author therefore links the daughters in the Palmyrenian inscription with the goddesses in Ugarit. He interprets the daughters of El in Palmyra as the three goddesses mentioned in the Koran (Allat, Al-Uzza and Manat) and deduces an equation of Allat with Athirat in Ugarit, because of the inscription

CIS II 185 from Salkhad who calls Allat the mother of the gods. The same epithet is known from Athirat in the Ugaritic mythology. The benefication in CIS II 185 for Rabbil is not interpreted as benefication for a Nabataean king, but the author wants to see a god's name to get the analogous pairs Allat/El and Athirat/El! The deity Qismaya, mentioned also in PAT 0992 is identified with Azizos. The Ugaritic Šalim is identified with Arṣu.

On the basis of KTU 1.23 the author investigates texts from the Bible (Isaiah 7 and 14; Revelation of St. John 12, Ijob), which contain the same mythological motives. At last he investigates the demon Azazel which is known from the Old Testament (Lev 16) and the book of Henoch and further Jewish literature (Book of Giants and other texts). Sometimes Azazel is combined with a second god (twin?). In the late texts he is understood as the fallen morning star.

Finally the author looks on the Samalian god Arq-Reshef who is etymologically linked with Ruḫa. Some other aspects in the religion of Sam'al hint at an early Arabian influence (early migration of Arabs?). Therefore it is difficult to compare Arq-Reshef with the Ugaritic Reshef who is equated with Nergal. The author links them all and uses the text KTU 1.78 where Reshef-Nergal is called the gate-keeper of the sun goddess Šapšu to see the same function as is said about Azizos and Monimos in Edessa.

The little book is very ambivalent. On the one hand, it offers a fullness of epigraphic and other material and a lot of deities are discussed. Thus it stimulates to think in a wider context and reflect on a general mythological idea. On the other hand the book offers a lot of material for discussion as concerns the arguments and conclusions of the author and in particular his methodical proceeding. His associations disregard large spaces of time, geographical distances and local cultural conditions. The mythological concepts that the author chose as criterion for comparison are moreover very general and can be found very often. Deities who are connected with the Venus star can be found in all Semitic religions; in many religions the birth of the godchild is known. The steppe as the area of chaos and death at the fringe of civilization corresponds with the ancient view of the world. The original question for the indigenous tradition of the twin gods seems sometimes lost. This proves that this motive can not be pursued exactly through all spaces of time; the author needs additional mythological aspects to construct continuity indirectly. The author's thesis stimulates to further reflection, but cannot convince in the presented way.

Dagmar KÜHN